

Memorandum

TO: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager 
FROM: Jessica Bellah, Community Planner
VIA: Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development
DATE: September 6, 2016
RE: Woodspring Suites, DSP-15044

Background

The City has received, by referral, an application for proposed development of a Woodspring Suites extended stay hotel located at 7480 Greenway Center Drive (DSP-15044). The subject property is located west and to the rear of the Greenway Shopping Center, west of the PM Pediatrics building, north of the Maryland Trade Center, and adjacent to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. This case will be reviewed at the Planning Board level and a hearing date has been set for September 29, 2016.

The application is for a five-story, approximately 124+ room hotel and associated parking to be constructed on approximately 3.03 acres. The project site consists primarily of existing paved area and the proposed development would therefore be constructed on property which is already dedicated to impervious surface. Amenities for the project include a fitness center with machines and exercise equipment, a lobby with a gathering area and a central common space, laundry facilities for guest use and a market. Rooms have kitchenettes with two-burner stoves, wall mounted microwaves, refrigerators, and a sink.

Prior to submission of the current Detailed Site Plan, the Applicant presented a Site Development Concept Plan to the Advisory Planning Board (APB) at their May 11, 2016 meeting. The Board provided early input on the project and made several recommendations which are outlined in APB Report No. 2016-02. The Board was favorable toward the project and recommended the inclusion of strong pedestrian connections, increased green area, and the addition of several site amenities to the final design.

Analysis

Staff has reviewed the application materials consisting of the Detailed Site Plan, Landscape Plan, architecture elevations, and the approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan for the proposed Woodspring Suites project. In addition to this initial submission package, the Applicant has provided a rendered exhibit which responds to staff's comments as well as preliminary comments provided by M-NCPPC's technical review staff. The proposed changes and amenities shown in the rendered exhibits will require additional scrutiny once they have been translated to plan form. As of this memo, revised plans incorporating the exhibits have not been received and more or different comments may result from a detailed review of the revised plans.

Architecture

The proposed architecture consists primarily of Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) as a siding material, partial brick first floor, and an articulated flat roof with decorative cornice. Visual interest is created by the use of three distinct colors applied to different vertical sections of the EIFS siding, use of brick to partially wrap the first floor, and changes in building heights throughout the elevation.

Prince George's County's Planning Board has previously approved a Woodspring Suites product with significantly different building materials. M-NCPPC technical staff recommends several revisions to the proposed architecture, which staff has outlined and assessed below. Staff concurs with their assessment and recommendations.

Staff finds that the project would be improved by a change in building material. It is recommended Council support the County's recommendation to substitute the proposed EIFS siding with a more durable material. This change is especially important within the pedestrian realm as EIFS is prone to be easily damaged, develop cracks, and is not suitable for heavily trafficked pedestrian areas. M-NCPPC staff recommends EIFS be substituted with HardiBoard. Staff recommends the proposed first floor brick be wrapped entirely around the building into a continuous strip to provide a durable material in the pedestrian realm.

Staff finds that the project's aesthetics would be improved by the substitution of the proposed white brick with a red-toned brick. This would provide a richness of color and contrast, increasing visual interest in the project. In addition, it is recommended that the red brick siding be periodically run to the roofline. These two changes would break up the massing of the building and improve its aesthetic appeal, creating a more comfortable experience at the pedestrian scale.

Pedestrian Connectivity

In response to the APB's recommendation, the Applicant has provided a new sidewalk on their primary access drive. The sidewalk connects to existing sidewalks in the Maryland Trade Center development and provides a continuous dedicated pedestrian route from the hotel to Greenway Center Drive.

Staff worked with the Applicant to create a pedestrian connection from the hotel to existing retail at Greenway Shopping Center. In response to staff comments, the Applicant has provided a rendered concept showing the proposed alignment of this path. Staff is supportive of the proposed pedestrian connection as shown, but may have additional comments once revised plans are received.

Landscaping

The landscape plan generally meets applicable landscaping requirements; except that M-NCPPC technical staff has indicated the Applicant will need to seek Alternative Compliance for interior parking lot planting requirements. In response to staff comments, the Applicant has submitted a rendered exhibit showing additional island planting areas and concentrated plantings near a the pedestrian walkway. Staff is supportive of the new planting scheme shown in the rendered exhibit. Unless new issues are raised during detailed review of the revised plans, staff

recommends the City support the Applicant's proposal for Alternative Compliance for landscaping requirements.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater for the site will be handled by several micro-bioretenction planter boxes and Filtera structures¹, which were conditioned as part of the Stormwater Management Concept approval. Staff finds no issues with the proposed and approved Environmental Site Design shown on the plans.

Site Amenities

In response to the APB's recommendation, the Applicant has provided additional site amenities including bike racks and a picnic area.

The plan meets most applicable landscaping, parking, and green area requirements. The Applicant plans to seek Alternative compliance for those requirements which are not met. Overall, the Applicant has been responsive to the APB's and staff's requests to increase green space in the parking area, provide pedestrian connections, and incorporate desirable site amenities.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends City Council support the Detailed Site Plan for Woodspring Suites (DSP-15044) with the following conditions:

- 1) Applications for Alternative Compliance shall be referred to the City for comment and final approval.
- 2) Prior to plan certification, the Applicant shall demonstrate through Alternative Compliance for interior planting for parking lots that adequate conditions have been provided to ensure the viability of plantings for the proposed development. Sufficient planting area and growing media shall be provided to support healthy and long-term tree growth.
- 3) Prior to plan certification, the Applicant shall provide revised plans that shown a dedicated, protected, pedestrian path connecting from the hotel to the adjacent nearby commercial area (Greenway Shopping Center) and shall meet the following conditions:
 - a. The pedestrian connection shall follow the proposed alignment in Applicant's Exhibit titled *Woodspring Suites at Greenbelt Pedestrian Exhibit*.
 - b. The path shall be no less than five feet wide and shall meet ADA requirements.
 - c. Stamped and colored concrete shall be utilized for proposed crosswalks and wherever the pathway is at grade with surrounding asphalt to promote safety and

¹ A below-ground filtration structure designed to filter stormwater. These structures are primarily used in areas where there is insufficient space for above ground treatment practices.

improve the aesthetic value of the project. A detail demonstrating this condition shall be provided prior to plan certification.

- d. Adequate plantings shall be provided adjacent to the path to provide additional green areas, provide buffer between the connection and adjacent parking, and to improve the aesthetic value of the project.
- 4) Prior to plan certification, plans shall be revised to incorporate furniture for the picnic area shown in Applicant's Exhibit titled *Woodspring Suites at Greenbelt Pedestrian Exhibit*.
- 5) Prior to plan certification, the architecture shall be updated in the following ways:
- a. Replace EIFS siding with Hardiboard
 - b. Replace the proposed white brick with red brick
 - c. Periodically run red brick up to the roofline
 - d. Red brick shall wrap the entire first floor.